Local Community Consultation

Compilation of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Findings

Belaga High Carbon Stock (HCS) Recovery Plan Glenealy Plantations Sdn Bhd (GPSB)

Belaga District Sarawak, Malaysia

July 2022



Prepared by Malaysian Environmental Consultants

1 Introduction

The Belaga HCS Recovery Site is in the Belaga District, Kapit Division, Sarawak, Malaysia. It is about 89 km from Belaga City and 139 km from Bintulu City. As is common in the interior of Sarawak, community settlements usually take the form of a longhouse, close to rivers or roads that have were built by the government.

On the 2nd and 3rd of July 2022, MEC, on behalf of GPSB, conducted consultation sessions with the local communities who reside within the Belaga HCS Recovery Site area of importance. Three longhouses were visited namely, (i) Rh. Nyalang, (ii) Rh. Seping Long Bala and (iii) Uma Sambop.

1.1 Objective of Local Community Consultation

The objectives of the consultation and FGDs are as follows:

- To follow up with the local communities after the open dialogue held on 31st March 2022 in Belaga Estate.
- To obtain feedback from the local communities in a focused discussion setting.
- To assess any form of dependency on natural resources within the Recovery Site.
- To assess the contribution of the Recovery Site to the local community livelihood.
- To explore overall willingness to take part in the Belaga HCS Recovery Site management plan.
- To explore local community economic opportunities arising from the management of this site.

2 Social Description and Land Use Trends

The community groups surrounding the Belaga HCS Recovery Site consist of with 2 Dayak sub-tribes, namely Suku Kenyah and Suku Seping. Table 2.1 describes the communities surrounding the Belaga HCS Recovery Site and Table 2.1 focuses on the local communities' access to their basic needs.

Village	Ethnic Group	Social description
Village Rh. Nyalang	Ethnic Group Suku Kenyah	 Social description It is the closest longhouse to the Belaga HCS Recovery Site, and it has 38 units. Each unit (or family) owns 10-50 ha of oil palm smallholdings. Fresh fruit bunches (FFB) can be harvested 2-3 times per month. Oil palm smallholding is their main source of livelihood Some residents still cultivate paddy (1-2 ha per family). Residents have a low dependency on the resources of the recovery site: Occasionally gather timber for building materials and firewood for cooking, Sometimes hunt wild boars, civets, deer, and squirrels using dogs, and
		 Gather rattan and other wild vegetables on a need basis.

Table 2.1: Brief description of the communities surrounding Belaga HCS Recovery Site



Village	Ethnic Group	Social description
		 However, commercial alternatives to these resources are easily available as these are modern settlements in a rural setting. Clean water is sourced from the Bera'an River, a natural spring and the nearby waterfall (located within the recovery site). Bera'an River is also where residents fish and find other sources of protein such as snails and soft-shell turtles (labi-labi).
Rh. Seping Long Bala	Suku Seping	 Rh. Seping is a modern longhouse with 35 units. The residents' source of income is from their oil palm smallholdings. The fresh fruit bunches are sold to Sarawak Oil Palms Berhad (SOP) Palm Oil Mill. Some residents still fish in the Belaga River. The residents are no longer dependent on the Belaga River for clean water. The residents are not dependent on the resources of the recovery site. NTFP resources such as rattan are gathered from the forest near Rh. Seping, where hunting also occurs. The recovery site area was previously important for hunting and farming.
Rh. Sambop	Suku Kenyah	 Currently, Rh. Sambop is a wooden longhouse which consist of 78 units. The new longhouse (located not far from the current longhouse) is still under construction and will consists of 100 units. The residents source of income is from their oil palm smallholdings. The fresh fruit bunches are sold to Sarawak Oil Palms Berhad (SOP) Palm Oil Mill. Residents still gather rattan from the forest near the longhouse (not within recovery site) to weave into mats and <i>daun biru</i> to weave into traditional hats and food covers (<i>tudung saji</i>). The residents also extract timber from forest near their long houses to build houses. The recovery site area was previously important for hunting and farming.

Source: MEC, 2022.

Table 2.1: Local communities' access to their basic needs

Basic Needs	Rh. Nyalang	Rh. Seping Long Bala	Rh. Sambop
Education facilities	 School-going children attend school in Sungai Asap Town (<i>Pekan Sungai Asap</i>) which has boarding facilities. 	 School-going children attend school in Sungai Asap Town which has boarding facilities. 	 Standard 1-6 students attend school in Kampung Sambop. Secondary school-going children attend school in



Basic Needs	Rh. Nyalang	Rh. Seping Long Bala	Rh. Sambop
	 There are several kindergartens nearby the longhouse. 	 There are several kindergartens near by the longhouse. 	 Sungai Asap Town which has boarding facilities. There are several kindergartens near by the longhouse.
Medical facilities	 Residents will either go to Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town to seek medical attention. Expecting mothers would also do their routine check-ups and deliver in Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town. 	 Residents will either go to Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town to seek medical attention. Expecting mothers would also do their routine check- up and deliver in Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town. 	 Residents will either go to Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town to seek medical attention.
Source of clean water	 Clean water is sourced from Bera'an River, a natural spring and the nearby waterfall (located within the recovery site). However, the waterfall has been polluted due to commercial logging activities. Pipes are connected from the water sources to each of the longhouse units. The residents face shortage of clean water during drought season. 	 Clean water is sourced from natural spring from Bukit Anjau, near Semakat River. The residents are no longer dependent on Belaga River for clean water because it has been polluted and causes skin irritation. 	 Clean water is sourced from natural spring nearby the longhouse. During the drought season, residents have to depend on the Belaga River for domestic use.
Access to daily necessities	 Residents would do their grocery shopping in Sungai Asap or Bintulu Towns. 	 Residents would do their grocery shopping in Sungai Asap or Bintulu Towns. There is also a canteen located nearby where residents can buy basic necessities. 	Residents would do their grocery shopping in Sungai Asap or Bintulu Towns.
Access to electricity	 Although the longhouse is connected to government electricity grid, it only lasts for 1-4 hours. Hence, the residents have to depend on their generators for electricity. 	• The longhouse is connected to government electricity grid.	• The longhouse is connected to government electricity grid.



Basic Needs	Rh. Nyalang	Rh. Seping Long Bala	Rh. Sambop
	 The government has provided solar cells to Rh. Nyalang. 		

The Belaga HCS Recovery Site is surrounded by logging concessions, forest plantation and oil palm companies. Surrounding the site is accessible by a road network. There are also small rivers within the recovery site that flow into Bera'an and Iga Rivers. The local communities are quite dependent on these two rivers for source of protein and also water.

Land use trends depend on the distribution of the population throughout an area. In the areas surrounding the recovery site, the majority of the population are heavily influenced by traditional agricultural practices specific to land use activities, be it in the past or the present. The dynamics of the land use began to change when timber companies began to develop the area. The road access built by these companies that entered into this area are still being used by the local communities. In this rural setting, road access is very important and this has been improved with the presence of oil palm and timber plantations, as well as timber concession. Due to the development of oil palm smallholdings.



3 Compilation of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Findings

3.1 Rh. Nyalang

Date	:2 nd July 2022
Time	: 2:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Location	: Rh. Nyalang
No. of Participants	: 38 (including GPSB and MEC team)





No.	Category		Description
1.	Background	•	Rh. Nyalang is the nearest settlement to the Belaga HCS recovery
	information on		site.
	Rh. Nyalang	•	The longhouse is made out of wood and consists of 38 units. There
			are plans to expand the longhouse and several units are being
			renovated by the unit owners.
2.	Source of	•	Each unit owns 10-50 ha of oil palm smallholdings. Fresh fruit bunches
	income and		(FFB) can be harvested 2-3 times per month. Oil palm smallholding is
	livelihood		their main source of livelihood.
		•	There are residents who still cultivate paddy (1-2 ha per family).
		•	Residents still gather rattan from the forest near the longhouse and
			at the boundary of the recovery site.
		•	The women also do subsistence farming such as cucumber, mustard
			greens (<i>sawi</i>), Borneo sour eggplant (<i>terung asam</i>) and others.
3.	Dependency	•	Residents are still dependent on the recovery site for:
	on the		a. Occasionally gathering timber for building materials and firewood
	recovery site		for cooking,
			b. Sometimes hunting wild boars, civets, deer and squirrels using
			dogs, and
			c. Gathering rattan and other wild vegetables on a need basis.
4.	Education	•	School-going children attend school in Sungai Asap Town (Pekan
	facilities		Sungai Asap) which has boarding facilities.
		•	There are several kindergartens nearby the longhouse.
5.	Medical	•	Residents will either go to Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town to seek
	facilities		medical attention.
		•	Expecting mothers would also do their routine check-ups and deliver
			in Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu town.
6.	Employment	•	The residents used to work in Belaga Estate (under GPSB) however,
	under Belaga		the workers quit when they are not allowed to stay outside of the
	Estate		estate's living quarters.
_		•	At present, only one resident is working for the Belaga Palm Oil Mill.
7.	Source of clean	•	Clean water is sourced from Bera'an River, a natural spring and the
	water and fish		nearby waterfall (located within the recovery site). However, the
			waterfall has been polluted due to commercial logging activities.
		•	Pipes are connected from the water sources to each of the longhouse
			units.
		•	The residents face shortage of clean water during the drought
8.	Accors to daily	-	season.
0.	Access to daily necessities	•	Residents would do their grocery shopping in Sungai Asap Town or Bintulu Town.
9.	Access to		
9.	electricity	•	Although the longhouse is connected to government electricity grid,
			it only lasts for 1-4 hours. Hence, the residents have to depend on
			their generators for electricity.
		•	The government has provided solar cells to Rh. Nyalang.



No.	Category	Description
10.	CSR	Has requested the company for funds to expand the longhouse,
		however, the company has not given any response up until now.
11.	Residents'	Residents have concerns over access to the site where collection of
	perception	NTFP and hunting.
	towards the	• Residents still require extracting timber to expand the longhouse 60-
	recovery site	70 more units and also to rehabilitate dilapidated sections of the
		longhouse.
		• Signages that were installed at the Recovery Site prohibits locals to
		access the site.
		• The Recovery Site land belonged to RH. Nyalang before Samling.
		Now, residents are accused of trespassing the land.
		• Another reason why the residents are concerned about the Recovery
		Site project is because they have experienced 'empty promises' from
		other companies who had organised similar projects. The residents
		are worried they will not be given access to their own land anymore
		because of the Recovery Site.
		• Rh. Nyalang is already surrounded by oil palm. The Recovery Site is
		the only forest patch left for the future generation.



Attendance List

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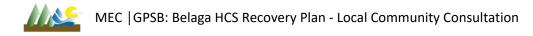
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3.2 Rh. Seping Long Bala

Date	:2 nd July 2022
Time	: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm
Location	: Rh. Seping Long Bala
No. of Participants	: 19 (including GPSB and MEC team)











No.	Category	Description
1.	Background information on Rh. Seping	• Rh. Seping is a modern longhouse with 32 units with an additional 3 units made from wood. The total units available is 35.
2.	Source of income and livelihood	 The residents' source of income is from their oil palm smallholdings. The fresh fruit bunches are sold to Sarawak Oil Palms Berhad (SOP) Palm Oil Mill. There are residents who still cultivate paddy near by the Belaga River. Residents still gather rattan, bamboo shoot and other wild vegetables from nearby forest. Rattan is weaved into baskets to carry palm fresh fruit bunches. The locals here infrequently hunt is the forest adjacent to their longhouse. The local communities' fish in the Belaga and Bala Rivers.
3.	Dependency on the recovery site	 The residents are not dependent on the resources of the recovery site. NTFP resources such as rattan are gathered from the forest near Rh. Seping, where hunting also occurs. There is a river near to the recovery site, Jimaun River, where locals look for snails (Obtuse Horn Shell- <i>tengkuyung</i>).
4.	Education facilities	 Children from this longhouse attend a school in Sungai Asap Town which dormitories facilities. There are several kindergartens near by the longhouse.
5.	Medical facilities	 Residents and expecting mothers use the clinic or medical centers in Sungai Asap or Bintulu towns.
6.	Employment under Belaga Estate	 The residents used to work in Belaga Estate (under GPSB) however, the workers quit in 2015 when they are not allowed to stay outside of the estate's living quarters. At present, only one or two residents are working for the Belaga Palm Oil Mill. Currently, most residents manage their own oil palm smallholdings.
7.	Source of clean water	 Clean water is sourced from natural spring from Bukit Anjau, near Semakat River. The residents are no longer dependent on Belaga River for clean water because it has been polluted and causes skin irritation.
8.	Access to daily necessities	 Residents would do their grocery shopping in Sungai Asap Town or in Bintulu Town. There is also a canteen located nearby where residents can buy basic necessities.
9.	Access to electricity	• The longhouse is connected to government electricity grid.
10.	CSR	• The residents have not receive any CSR benefits from the company.



No.	Category	Description
11.	Residents	Residents who participated in the consultation session agreed to the
	perception	establishment of the Recovery Site. However, they are concerned
	towards the	their rights to hunt and gather NTFP will be diminished.
	recovery site	There are reports that empty fruit bunches are stacked on the
		riverbanks, directly polluting the river.
		• Residents are dependent on the forest near their longhouse. So, they
		have no need to depend on the Recovery Site unless the forest
		adjacent to the longhouse is developed.



Attendance List

			Attendance Sheet	Form No:	SPB/	BRP/F00a		
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3.3 Rh. Sambop

Date	:3 rd July 2022
Time	: 11:00 am – 2:30 pm
Location	: Rh. Sambop
No. of Participants	: 52 (including MEC team)











No.	Category	Description
1.	Background information on Rh. Sambop	 Currently, Rh. Sambop is a wooden longhouse which consist of 78 units. The new longhouse (located near the current longhouse) is still under construction and will be consist of 100 units. Some families have moved to the new longhouse. Historically, ths residents of Rh. Sambop are the indigenous people of the Belaga River area and have settled here since the year 1808. Rh. Sambop is located across the Wae River from Rh. Nyalang.
2.	Source of income and livelihood	 The residents' source of income are from their oil palm smallholdings. The fresh fruit bunches are sold to Sarawak Oil Palms Berhad (SOP) Palm Oil Mill. Residents still gather rattan from the forest near the longhouse to weave into mats and <i>daun biru</i> to weave into traditional hats and food covers (<i>tudung saji</i>). Timber are extracted by residents to build houses.
3.	Dependency on the recovery site	• The residents are not dependent on the recovery site. Resources are gathered from the forest near Rh. Sambop.
4.	Education facilities	 Standard 1-6 students attend school in Kampung Sambop. Secondary children from this longhouse attend a school in Sungai Asap Town which dormitories facilities. There are several kindergartens near by the longhouse.
5.	Medical facilities	Residents use the clinic or medical centers in Sungai Asap or Bintulu towns
6.	Employment under Belaga Estate	Residents here are not working in Belaga Estate.
7.	Source of clean water	 Clean water is sourced from natural spring nearby the longhouse. During the drought season, residents depend on the Belaga River for domestic use.
8.	Access to daily necessities	 Residents would do their grocery shopping in Sungai Asap Town or in Bintulu Town.
9.	Access to electricity	• The longhouse is connected to government grid electricity.
10.	CSR	 It is difficult to request for aid from the company. The company would require an official letter from the longhouse. The company should provide aid for longhouse development and children's education.
11.	Residents perception towards the recovery site	 Tuai Rumah Sambop (Head of the longhouse): The tuai rumah attended the open dialogue held of March 2022 in Belaga Estate Training Centre. The residents would agree to the recovery site as long as there is proof of agreement.



No.	Category	Description
		 Anggota Pengurus Tuai Rh. Sambop (Committee member): The company has not responded to any of the communities' demands simple because these requests were mainly oral and not through a formal communication process. This has Although the land is not being utilized, residents of Rh. Sambop verbally laid claims of user rights to the recovery site. Clarification on the recovery site boundary should be presented to the community as the residents are concerned that the company will take over their native land within the recovery site. The company should demarcate the boundary clearly to avoid conflict with Rh. Nyalang.
12.	Recommendations	 It is possible for the longhouses can take turns to manage the recovery site.



Attendance List

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	Lokasi: Umu Sambop					
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7.	Annie Jalong	4				
3.	Maradu	MEC				



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49.	Knadijah	MEC					
50.	Anatalia Sri	MEC					
51		MEC					
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4 Summary of the Local Community Consultation

Based on the consultation sessions conducted, the following are the main findings that GPSB needs to focus on:

1. The local communities agree on the establishment of the Recovery site.

Locals are supportive of this recovery project as they understand the benefits it entails. They hope to seek employment or economic opportunities through this recovery project. Thus, local community involvement is an important aspect in assuring the success of managing the area. However, there some communities who are pessimistic of the company's commitment and contribution to this Recovery Project as there are other companies who have previously bailed out on their commitments.

2. Dependency on the recovery site to gather NTFPs, extract timber and hunt.

The residents of Rh. Nyalang mentioned that they are still dependent on the recovery site for natural resources. The company should engage with the residents and obtain coordinates where the locals still hunt or gather NTFP.

3. Confusion of the legal and native customary rights over the Belaga Recovery Site.

The general perception is that the local communities still have user and native customary rights over the Belaga Recovery Site. Thus, they have expressed a claim over the land and are concerned over diminishing access to utilise the land. Although it has been clarified through the Open Dialogue, by the Forest Department Sarawak, that the site is within a concession that is a State Land, the local community continuous to persist that they have some form of rights. To resolve, the involvement of the State authority is necessary. It should be highlighted that community's use of the site will be negotiated at the time of the development.

4. There are potential land claims between Rh. Nyalang and Rh. Sambop within the recovery site.

Both Rh. Nyalang and Rh. Sambop are still under the impression that the recovery site belongs to them. There is potential for social conflict to emerge. The company should engage with these communities to further clarify this matter. The company will take a consultative approach with these communities in order to come up with the solution to resolve this, with the involvement of the relevant government and the Forest Department Sarawak.

5. Locals are still unsure the extent of the recovery site.

The local community confusion regarding the extend of the recovery site will be resolved once the boundary of the site is fully demarcated on the ground and the number of signboards increased. All matters regarding the boundary comprehensively discussed in the management planning exercise which will be totally inclusive and consultative.